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Amendments to the Claims

Applicants submit amended claims 1, 2, 3, and 23. Claims 1, 2, 3, and 23 are amended without any intention of disclaiming equivalents thereof. Claim 1 is amended to replace the term "heterodimeric cytokine" with "interleukin-12 (IL-12)." Support for this amendment is found in the specification, at least in Example 2 and Fig. 3. Furthermore, in claim 1, line 5, minor amendments have been made to correct a typographical error.

Claim 2 is amended to replace the terms "heterodimeric cytokine" and "cytokine" with "IL-12." Support for this amendment is found in the specification, at least in Example 2 and Example 4.

Claim 3 is amended to replace the terms "heterodimeric cytokine" and "cytokine" with "IL-12." Support for this amendment is found in the specification, at least in Example 2 and Fig. 3.

Claim 23 is amended to replace the terms "heterodimeric cytokine" and "cytokine" with "IL-12." Support for this amendment is found in the specification, at least in Example 2 and Figs. 1 and 3.

Applicants submit that these new claims introduce no new matter.

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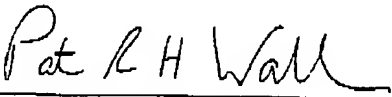
CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned representative prior to issuing a first Office Action in this application. Applicants believe that no further fee is due at the time of submission of this paper. However, in the event that any further fees are due, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any such fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 20-0531.

The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicants' undersigned representative to discuss any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS SHOWING AMENDMENTS

1. A heterodimeric fusion protein comprising a first and a second chimeric chain, said first chimeric chain comprising a portion of an Ig heavy chain linked by a peptide bond to a first subunit of [~~a heterodimeric cytokine~~] interleukin-12 (IL-12), said second chimeric chain comprising a portion of an Ig heavy chain linked by a peptide bond to a second subunit of [~~said heterodimeric cytokine~~] IL-12, said first and [~~a~~] second [~~chain~~] chimeric chains being linked by a disulfide bond.
2. A fusion protein comprising a first chimeric Ig chain comprising a portion of an Ig heavy chain linked by a peptide bond to a first subunit of [~~a heterodimeric cytokine~~] IL-12, said first subunit of [~~said cytokine~~] IL-12 being linked to a second subunit of [~~said cytokine~~] IL-12.
3. The fusion protein of claim 2 further comprising a second chimeric Ig chain comprising a portion of an Ig heavy chain linked by a peptide bond to a first subunit of [~~a heterodimeric cytokine~~] IL-12, said first subunit of [~~said cytokine~~] IL-12 being linked to a second subunit of [~~said cytokine~~] IL-12, said first and second chimeric chains being linked by a disulfide bond.
23. A method of increasing the circulating half-life of [~~a heterodimeric cytokine~~] IL-12, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) linking a first subunit of [~~said heterodimeric cytokine~~] IL-12 by a peptide bond to a polypeptide, thereby forming a first chimeric chain, said first subunit of [~~said cytokine~~] IL-12 being linked to a second subunit of [~~said cytokine~~] IL-12 by a disulfide bond;
 - (b) linking a first subunit of [~~said heterodimeric cytokine~~] IL-12 by a peptide bond to a polypeptide, thereby forming a second chimeric chain, said first subunit of [~~said cytokine~~] IL-12 being linked to a second subunit of [~~said cytokine~~] IL-12 by a disulfide bond; and

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(c) linking said first and said second chimeric chain by a disulfide bond, thereby forming a heterodimeric fusion protein, said fusion protein having a longer circulating half-life than unlinked first and second ~~[heterodimeric cytokines]~~ subunits of IL-12.